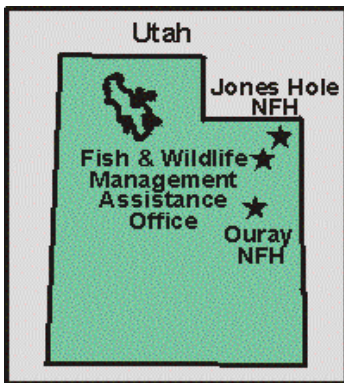




Ouray National Fish Hatchery, Utah

Restoring America's Fisheries



"The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."

National Fish Hatchery System; Who We Are

The National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) is comprised of 70 Fish Hatcheries, 7 Fish Technology Centers, and 9 Fish Health Centers nationwide. The NFHS operated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has a unique responsibility in helping restore native aquatic populations, mitigate for fisheries lost as a result of federal water projects, provide fish to benefit Tribes and the National Wildlife Refuges, and to recover species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The NFHS works closely with other programs in the Service and with the States, Tribes, and the private sector to complement habitat restoration and other resource management strategies for maintaining healthy ecosystems that support healthy fisheries.

Ouray National Fish Hatchery

Ouray NFH was officially designated as a National Fish Hatchery in 1996 after nine years as an experimental Native Fish Propagation Facility to hold and propagate endangered fish of the Colorado River. Today, the hatchery's primary emphasis is to provide refugia, propagation, and technology development to assist in the recovery of the four endangered Colorado River fish.

Ouray NFH is unique in that the hatchery is physically located on the Service's Ouray National Wildlife Refuge. The Ouray National Wildlife Refuge potentially has some of the best flooded bottomlands habitat along the Green River in the Upper Colorado River System and may be a critical link to establishing self-sustaining populations of these endangered fish.

The endangered fish that Ouray NFH rear include:

- razorback sucker
- Colorado pikeminnow
- bonytail
- humpback chub

To meet the high fish production demands, Ouray NFH has 36 rearing ponds. In fiscal year 2000, Ouray NFH primarily reared razorback sucker and bonytail, and stocked these fish into 13 different water areas.

What Does "Endangered" Mean?

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 defines an "*endangered*" species as one that is in danger of extinction

throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A "*threatened*" species is one likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has the primary responsibility of conservation coordination to help prevent extinction of these endangered Upper Colorado River System fish and the ecosystems that support them.

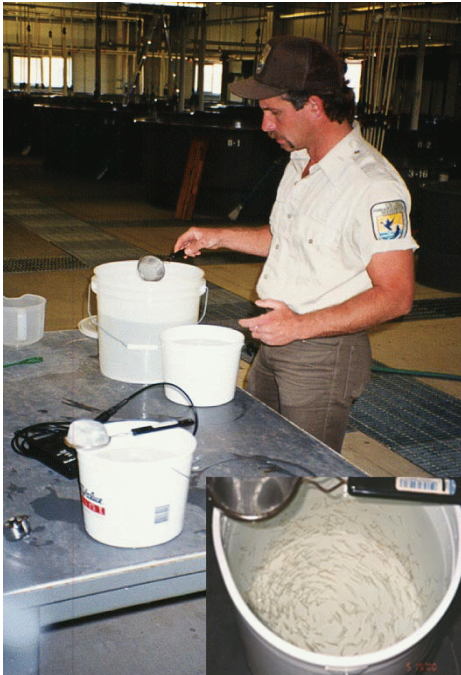
How Does the Hatchery Help?

Ouray NFH helps in many ways! Currently, the hatchery produces a variety of endangered fish species of the Green River, a part of the Upper Colorado River System. These fish help to replenish and encourage sustainable fish populations to promote a healthy Upper Colorado River Ecosystem.

As the natural aquatic habitat changes from *natural* (drought, flood, habitat destruction) or *human* (over-harvest, pollution, habitat loss due to development and dam construction) influences, the natural production of fish declines. Stocking of fish is one of the many management strategies used by biologists to help replenish the populations for years to come.



*Ouray National Fish Hatchery;
photo/Tom Czapl*



*Hatchery employee with larval fish;
USFWS*

- Canoeing
- Mountain biking
- Cross country skiing
- Snowshoeing

Be sure to bring your binoculars and test your wildlife knowledge; over 200 species of birds are found on the refuge. You just may be carried away with all the waterfowl and riparian birds!

Partnerships Make It Happen!

Ouray NFH supports the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program. This Program is a partnership of Federal and State fish and wildlife agencies, the Bureau of Reclamation, Western Area Power Administration, water users, power users, and environmental groups. The program was set up to recover the endangered fish while allowing for continued water development in the Upper Colorado River System.

Other partners include: Ouray National Wildlife Refuge, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and other Service hatcheries. In addition, many local schools and citizens are actively involved with the hatchery's research, operations, and education.

These many dedicated partners and volunteers help keep Ouray NFH operating to help recover the endangered Upper Colorado River Systems fish and promote a healthy aquatic ecosystem to you, your family, and future generations!

Join the hatchery staff each year for the annual open house held at the hatchery and refuge in early May, or see the staff at the Uintah County Fair.

Ouray NFH is located approximately 35 miles south of Vernal, along the Green River at the north end of Ouray National Wildlife Refuge. Come prepared for a day of fun!

Public Use Opportunities

Ouray NFH provides many exciting visitor opportunities at the hatchery and surrounding refuge area.

Open to the public, Ouray NFH welcomes visitors to the hatchery for a closeup view of the fish production process. The dedicated staff are happy to answer any questions while you explore the hatchery grounds and ponds. Educational programs and hatchery tours are provided to school groups and visitors when scheduled in advance.

In addition to the hatchery experience, visitors also have a bounty of recreational opportunities to explore in the surrounding Ouray National Wildlife Refuge:

- Hiking/nature trails
- Fishing
- Wildlife and birdwatching
- Photography



Endangered razorback sucker; USFWS